

Recovery from Sickness :

A

P R E S E N T

T O O N E

Lately raised from a

DANGEROUS DISORDER.

CONTAINING

SERIOUS REFLECTIONS,
RESOLUTIONS and DEVOTIONS

Suitable to that Occasion.

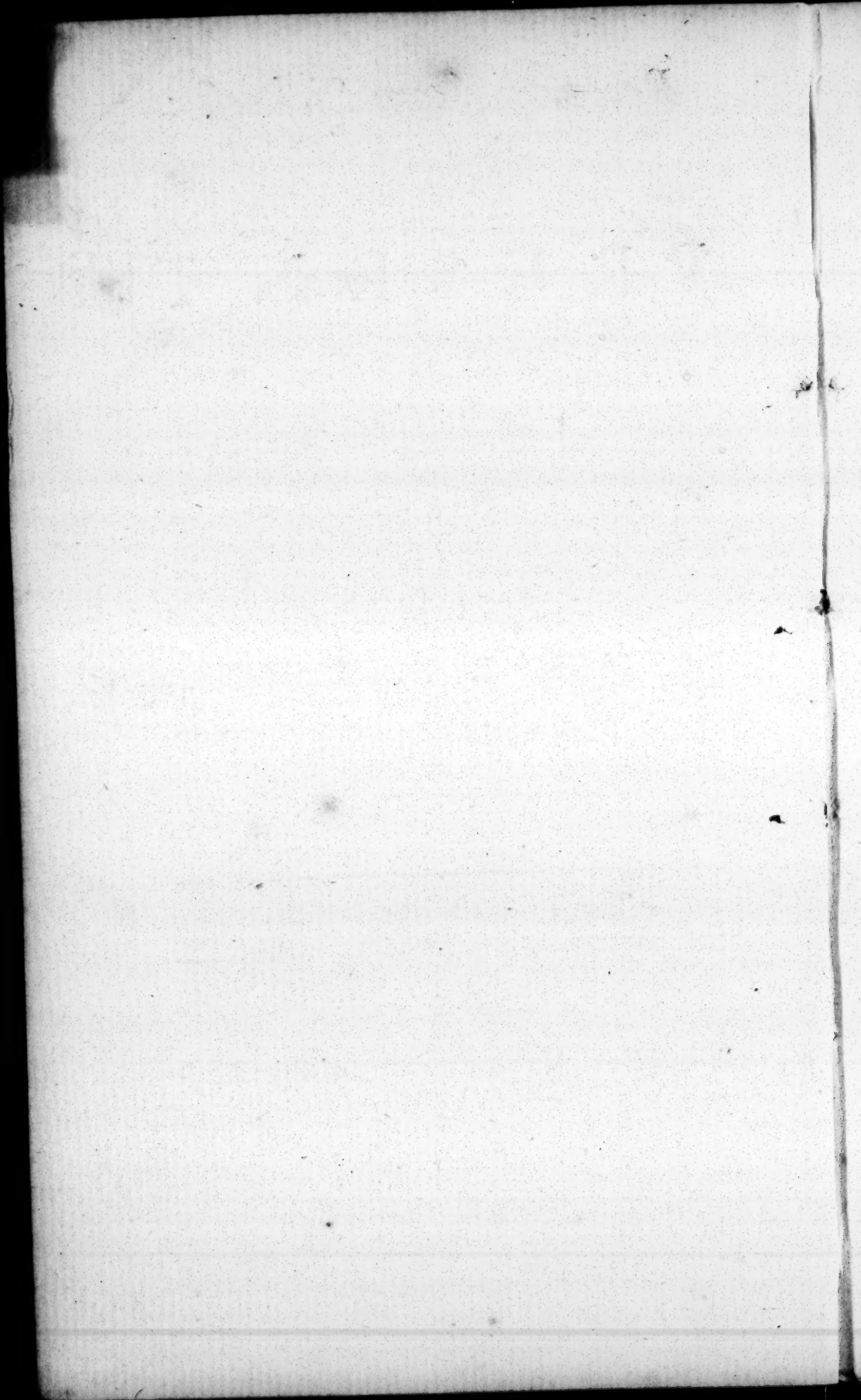
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RECOVERY

FROM

SICKNESS.

THRO' the great Mercy of GOD toward me, I am now recovered from a *dangerous Distemper*; I drew near to the Grave; dark and gloomy Shades began to stretch themselves over me, and to compass me around; and *I received within myself the Sentence of Death*—But behold! GOD hath turn'd again my Captivity; HE hath raised me as from the Dead; HE hath caused the *Light of Life* again to shine upon me; and hath brought me, as it were, *a-new* into the Land of the Living. What now becomes me upon *such an Occasion*? It is surely *most fit* that I should take this *first Opportunity* of Retiring by myself, of Bowing down, and Adoring my ALMIGHTY DELIVERER; and of making my *most humble* and *most thankful Acknowledgments* at the Throne of his Grace. It most highly becomes me *thus* to dedicate the *First Fruits* of this new Life he

has given me to *his Honour and Worship*; and to spend, at least, this *one Hour* in serious and devout Reflections suitable to my *present Case*.

I.

THE *first Thing* I have to do on this *Occasion*, is to endeavour to *affect my Mind with a very clear and lively Sense of the CONCERN which GOD has in the Affair of our SICKNESS or HEALTH, of our LIFE or DEATH*: To be fully persuaded that our *Times are in His Hands*^a; and that HE either shortens or prolongs them; casts down or raises up according to *his Pleasure*; and that *Distempers* come upon us, or forsake us *only at His Permission or Command*. See now that I, *even I am HE, and there is NO GOD with me; I kill, and I make alive; I wound and I heal*: Neither is there any that can deliver out of my *Hand*^b.

THIS Sense of GOD's *immediate Agency and Concern* in my late Sickness and Recovery, is to be laid down as *the Foundation* upon which my pious and devout Reflections are entirely to rest; let me be careful then to *lay it well*: Let me very attentively remember, that *one of his glorious Titles is GOD who quickeneth all Things*^c; and that *IN and BY HIM all live, and move, and have their Beings*^d—That 'tis only by *his ever-present INFLUENCE and OPERATION* that the Seasons change, the Clouds move, the Rains fall, and the Flowers grow: That HE is THE LIFE of the UNIVERSE; *from whom, all its*

^a *Psal.* xxxi. 15.

^b *Deut.* xxxii. 39.

^c *1 Tim.* vi. 13.

^d *Acts* xvii. 28.

Motions and Parts originally sprang ; *by whom*, they are all continually directed and preserv'd ; and *without whom*, not a Sparrow falls to the Ground^e. This Sickness therefore could never have seized, and brought me so low, had not GOD given leave ; and having *seized*, would never have *left me*, 'till it had lain me in the Dust, had not GOD checked its Power, and said, *hitherto—and no further.*—

MY Pulse now beats ; and my Blood *flows regularly* thro' all its infinitely fine and numberless Canals, which lately was all *ruffled, tumultuous, and disturbed*. The *Springs of Life* which seem'd broken, are afresh strengthen'd and wound up : All the Movements and Parts of this my *wondrous Frame* are restored to their proper Order, and keep their appointed Course. But—WHO *is it* presides over, directs and preserves all these infinitely various *Motions* and *Springs* upon which my *Health* and *Vigour* depend ? 'Tis not I MY SELF. I am *conscious* of no Share, nor immediate Concern therein : No ; 'tis some *invisible, almighty, ever-present* POWER, in whom I live and move : 'Tis GOD, the *Fountain of Life*. If HE *hideth his Face*, I am troubled ; if HE suspendeth his Influence, I languish ; and if HE *taketh away my Breath*, I die^t. Of HIM, and through HIM, and to HIM are all Things^s : To HIM therefore be all *Glory*, and *Homage*, and *Praise*.

^e Matt. x. 29.

^t Ps. civ. 29.

^s Rom. xi. 36.

II.

HAVING thus clearly settled it in my Mind, that *nothing comes by Chance*; and that neither my late *Sickness*, nor *Recovery*, are principally to be ascribed to any, what are commonly call'd *Accidents*, nor yet to any *Will or Power of Man*; but to the *Alwise Permission, or Power of GOD*; I am next to settle it as a Point equally clear—*That an alwise and good GOD would never have sent this Affliction upon me, but for some gracious and kind Design; intending MY GOOD.*

HE never afflicts willingly^h: Nor brings us into *Heaviness*, but when 'tis needful for usⁱ. And when the blessed FATHER of our Spirits lays any Corrections on us, 'tis not for his own Pleasure, but only for our Profit, that we may be made Partakers of his Holiness^k. Both Reverence then to the Almighty SOVEREIGN, and a Regard to my own Happiness, oblige me with great Humility and Attention to enquire--WHAT the wise and kind Design of Divine Providence might be in this Visitation? Was it,

1. FOR the Tryal of my Virtues? To prove my Faith in GOD; my Hope in Jesus Christ; my Patience and Christian Fortitude; my Mortification to the present World; and my Victory over Death? Was it to give me an Opportunity of exercising and shewing forth these worthy Dispositions, and this right Temper of Soul, by which GOD is glorified, and our Christian Profession is honoured and adorned?—If this was the Design of Heaven: How was it answered by

^h Lam. iii. 33. ⁱ 1 Pet. i. 6. ^k Heb. xii. 10.

me?

Recovery from Sickneſs.

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me? How, *my Soul*, didſt thou behave: *meek* and *reſigned* under the divine Stroke; or elſe *fretful* and *impatient*? *Easy* and *compoſed*; or *tumultuous* and *diſturbed*? Didſt thou cling faſt to the *preſent World*, as one going to loſe his *Portion*, his *Happineſs*, his *ALL*; and look forward to the *future World* with Horror and Reluctance, as one who had no *Inter-eſt*, no *Acquaintance*, nor *Treafure* there—? Or, did this Viſitation find thee in ſome good meaſure *dead* to the Things of this mortal State? So *indifferent* to the Pleaſures and Poſſeſſions of the *Body*, and of this *animal Life*; and ſo *fully perſuaded* of that ſubſtantial and everlaſting Happineſs, which GOD *that cannot lye* has promiſed, and which CHRIST has purchaſed for all good Men beyond the Grave, that thou were't *content*, and even *willing*, if Providence ſo required, *now* to drop the *Body*, and to quit the preſent World, that being *abſent from theſe*, thou mighteſt be *preſent with the LORD*—?

As to this Matter, Regard indeed is to be had to the *natural* Conſtitution and Temperament of the *Body*; and to the *kind of Diſeaſe*, by which we are viſited. Some are even by *Nature* bold and intrepid; whiſt others are timorous, doubting, and gloomy. Some *kind of Diſtempers* alſo throw a *Stupor* and *Numbneſs*; others a *Languor* and *Lowneſs* upon the Spirits; and others again hurry them into *Tumult* and *Confuſion*. Now when the *Organs of the Body* are thus unhinged and diſturbed, the *Soul* cannot exert the *Virtue* and *Force*, the *pious* and *good Affections*, of which 'tis really poſſeſſed. To this alſo may be added, that the *Powers of*
Dark-

Darkness are sometimes, on such Occasions, permitted to assault us in an *extraordinary Manner*. Thus they did our LORD *himself*, when Death advanced towards him; they had Liberty to spread *such Horror and Darkness* over his Mind, as made it *exceeding sorrowful even unto Death*¹; yea, as threw him into an *Agony*, causing him to *sweat as it were great Drops of Blood*^m: and as forced him to *groan in Spirit, as one forsaken of God*ⁿ.—Great Allowance therefore is to be made for the *Dejections and Fears* which even good Persons *sometimes* manifest at the apprehended Approach of Death. However, as the *Christian Principles and Doctrine* when thoroughly received, and wrought into the Heart, will *generally* relieve this Weakness of Nature; and the *Power of Faith* will suppress the tormenting and slavish *Fears of Death*; it may *generally* be *imputed to us* as our *Fault and Neglect*, for which we ought to be sorry and humbled before GOD, when our *Fears* get head and prevail over our *Faith*.

‘ O GOD who knowest my *Weakness*: who
 ‘ sawest the *unworthy Diffidence and Reluctance*
 ‘ of my Heart: how fast it clung to this World:
 ‘ how little Inclination or Desire it shew’d to go
 ‘ up to thy SACRED PRESENCE, *where is Fulness*
 ‘ of Joy; and to those Mansions of Bliss, which
 ‘ JESUS my Saviour has prepared for his Servants,
 ‘ and where he now dwells; and to the glorious
 ‘ Company of *Angels, and the Spirits of the*

¹ Matt. xxvi. 38.
 xv. 34.

^m Luke xxii. 44.

ⁿ Mark

‘ Just surrounding thy Throne—Who sawest,
 ‘ how strong were my Fears; how languid my
 ‘ Hopes; how feeble my Faith; how faint my
 ‘ Courage; and how shamefully prevalent my
 ‘ Attachment to this *Body*, and to this *World*
 ‘ of *Sense*—Oh! pity and pardon this *weak*, this
 ‘ *unbecoming Behaviour* of thy Servant, and lay
 ‘ it not to my charge.—For any *Calmness* and
 ‘ *Fortitude* with which I was enabled to view
 ‘ *approaching Death*; and for any *Patience* and
 ‘ *Resignation* with which I behaved in these
 ‘ Scenes of Affliction through which I have now
 ‘ passed; I glorify and praise the *Eternal FA-*
 ‘ *THER of Lights*, from whom alone *every good*
 ‘ *and perfect Gift comes*: And I magnify and
 ‘ bless my *most gracious HIGH PRIEST and IN-*
 ‘ *TERCESSOR in Heaven*; who is touched with
 ‘ a tender Sense of *all our Infirmities*, and has
 ‘ sent down his *Angel*, yea, his *HOLY SPIRIT*
 ‘ the *Comforter*, to strengthen and bear me
 ‘ up.’ Or,

2. THIS Sickness was, perhaps, sent to a-
 waken me from some dangerous and sinful *Secu-*
 rity into which I was fallen—To rouse me to a
 due Concern about the State of my Soul—To
 make me turn my Eyes inward; and seriously
 enquire upon what Terms I stand with regard to
 GOD, to *Christ*, and the future *eternal World*—
 To stop my foolish Career in pursuit of *earthly*
 Things, by shewing me in this clear Light, their
 extreme *Vanity* and *Emptiness*—To give me a
 more affecting Sense of that *invisible and everlast-*
 ing *World*, upon the Brink of which I stand,
 and into which I must quickly pass; and to call
 upon me to make *more serious Preparation* for
 it.

it.—Too deeply was my Soul sunk into a *worldly* and *careless State*, when the *late Stroke* came upon me : And ah ! how sad had my Case been, had it taken me hence in *that State* ! ‘ Ever-
 ‘ lasting Thanks to the *Divine Patience*, that it
 ‘ tries me a little longer. I yet tremble to think
 ‘ of the great Danger which hung over me.
 ‘ LORD, I adore, I magnify thy *Grace*, that thou
 ‘ hast snatch’d me from the *Gates of Death*,
 ‘ from the *Gates*, perhaps, of *eternal Death*,
 ‘ which had else *now* been shut upon me.—I
 ‘ will ever henceforward walk with *greater Cau-*
 ‘ *tion*—Will never more so foolishly let down my
 ‘ Watch ; nor suffer myself to sink into a *sen-*
 ‘ *sual* and *earthly Life* ; nor put off the Thoughts
 ‘ of *Death* and *Eternity*. At *such an Hour* as
 ‘ I think not, I see, my LORD may come. It
 ‘ shall therefore be my *future daily Care*, to
 ‘ stand always *wakeful* and *prepared*.—I charge
 ‘ thee, O my Soul, to take heed and beware,
 ‘ that thou be never overcharged with *Surfeiting*
 ‘ or *Drunkenness*, or with the *Cares of this Life* ;
 ‘ lest that *Day* come upon thee *unawares* : Keep
 ‘ always a due Government and Possession of
 ‘ thyself ; and a due Indifference to the present
 ‘ World ; for thou knowest not *what a Day*
 ‘ will bring forth.’ But finally,

3. SUCH *Sicknesses* are sometimes sent as a *Chastisement for some Sin* : to admonish and correct us for some *particular Misconduct* with which we stand chargeable *before Heaven*. Of this kind David seems to have apprehended his *Distemper* to have been, under which he composed his xxxviii, xxxix, and xli Psalms : Where he thus humbles himself, and prays—*Thine Ar-*

rows sick fast in me, thy Hand presseth me sore. There is no Soundness in my Flesh because of thine Anger; neither is there any Rest in my Bones, because of my Sin.—When thou with Rebukes dost correct Man for Iniquity, thou makest his Beauty to consume away like a Moth.—Lord be merciful unto me, heal my Soul, for I have sinned against thee. So Elihu in the Book of Job, xxxiii. 19. represents an offending Man corrected for his Error. He is chastened with Pain upon his Bed, and the Multitude of his Bones with strong Pains. So that his Life abhorreth Meat, and his Soul dainty Meat. His Flesh is consumed away that it cannot be seen; and his Bones which were not seen, stick out. Yea, his Soul draweth near unto the Grave, and his Life to the Destroyers. But if there be a Messenger with him, an Interpreter, to shew unto Man his Uprightness: i. e. either God's Righteousness in thus correcting him; or else the righteous and good Temper to which by Repentance he ought to, and doth, return; Then he is gracious to him, and saith, deliver Him from going down to the Pit. His Flesh shall be fresher than a Child's; he shall return to the Days of his Youth. He shall pray unto GOD, and he will be favourable unto him; and he shall see his Face with Joy. He looketh upon Man, and if any say I have sinned and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not. He will deliver his Soul from going into the Pit, and his Life shall see the Light.

IN this Manner also we find the Corinthian Christians of old were rebuked for some gross Irregularities, some were weak and sickly amongst them;

them; and ſome even ſlept^o, were actually ſmit-
ten by Death. And theſe bodily Diſeaſes are
called by the Apoſtle *Chaiſements* and *Judgments*
of the Lord, ſent for their Spiritual or Moral
Benefit, that they might repent, and give Glory
to God, who hath Power over theſe Plagues, and
not be finally and eternally condemned. So
when St. James adviſes, *Is any ſick among you—*
let the Elders pray over him, and the Prayer of
Faith ſhall ſave the ſick, and the LORD ſhall
raiſe him up, and IF HE HATH COMMITTED
SINS, *they ſhall be FORGIVEN HIM* P: And
when the Apoſtle John in like manner ſays, *If*
any Man ſee his Brother ſin a Sin which is not
unto Death, he ſhall aſk, and He, i. e. GOD,
ſhall give him Life for them that ſin not unto
Death^q: From theſe Paſſages it ſeems plain that
Diſtempers and Pains are often ſent upon the
Body as a *Correſtion* for ſome *wrong Behaviour*—
To this alſo may be added, That they are fre-
quently the genuine, and the natural and
proper *Fruits* of ſome Irregularity. For the
greateſt Part of the *Diſorders* which afflict the
human Body, if traced to their true Origin,
would be found to owe their Birth to ſome cri-
minal Indulgence either of the *Appetites*, or of
the *Paſſions*, and not only to be the *poſitive* or
appointed Punishments, but even the genuine Ef-
fect of SIN.

IT becomes me therefore now impartially to
examine, whether this may not poſſibly have
been the Caſe as to my late Diſeaſe—Was it not

^o 1 Cor. xi. 30. P Jam. v. 14, 15. q 1 John
v. 16.

occasion'd by some Irregularity or Misconduct of my own? Is there no sinful or wrong Practice in which I allow myself? No Command of Heaven in the Violation of which I know myself to live? *' Search me, O GOD, and know my Heart :
' Try me and know my Thoughts : See if there be
' any evil Way in me ;* reclaim me from every Error ; and lead me in the Path of Righteousness and Truth. If these Strokes of thy Rod were level'd at any particular Misconduct of mine, to admonish and correct me for it, be pleased to open mine Eyes, and turn them towards it : *Convince me of Sin : Shew me
' my Error : I renounce, from my Soul, every
' wicked Way ; and would immediately forsake
' it ; and wherein I have done Evil, am resolved,
' by thy Grace, I will do it no more. I humble
' myself beneath thy mighty and correcting
' Hand. I desire meekly to kiss the Rod, and
' to acknowledge thy Sentence just. Yea, blessed be thy Name, thou hast temper'd Mercy
' with Justice, and that my abused, my forfeited Life is thus spared. Thou hast not been
' extreme to mark Iniquity against me, nor dealt
' with me rigorously according to my Desert.
' Righteous, O LORD, art thou, and merciful, as
' well as just, are thy Proceedings toward us.
' Being made whole, let me take heed that I
' wilfully sin no more, lest a worse Thing come
' unto me.'*

III.

ANOTHER Thing which now also highly behoves me is—*Carefully to call to mind, and to en-*

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deavour always to preserve the same serious, and right Sense of Things which I had on my SICK BED.

THEN, *in what a Light did I see, the Grandeurs, the Riches and Possessions of this World, which are wont so deeply to engross Mens Attention and Zeal ! What vain and empty Things did Dress, did Gold, did outward Pomp and Magnificence, which in time past, GOD knows, too much dazzled my weak Eyes, and captivated my foolish Heart ; What vain and empty Things did they all then appear ? Then I clearly saw the Wisdom of Religion : the inestimable Value of Piety and Virtue ; of a Life spent in the Fear of GOD ; of a Conscience bearing Witness to one's Sincerity, and by Faith in the Blood of JESUS purged from all Guilt. Had the Indies been mine, how gladly would I have then given them for a rational Assurance of the Favour of GOD, and of the Forgiveness of my Sins ? Remember, my Soul, how thou didst then admire and applaud the Conduct of those, who had given themselves sincerely to the Practice of Virtue ; who had religiously spent their Sabbaths ; who worshipped GOD in their Families ; who retired daily from the World, to maintain an Intercourse with divine and invisible Things by serious Meditation and Prayer in secret ; and who kept themselves unspotted by the Corruptions of the present State—These I then saw to be the only wise and happy Persons. With what Earnestness did I then wish, that my Life had been thus spent ! With what Solemnity vow, that if GOD would now spare me, my Life should be thus religiously devoted to Him for the future ! How heartily*
did

did I resolve, that I would never more take the *undue Liberties* I had before done—That I would keep a stricter Guard upon my *Appetites*, upon my *Passions*, upon my *Tongue*, and upon *all the Powers* both of my Body and my Mind—That I would better improve my *Time*—Would more carefully spend my *Sabbaths*—Would *acquaint myself* more with GOD and the Truths of Religion—Would live more *disengaged* from the *present World*, as expecting shortly to leave it ; and more *under the Power* of the *World to come*, as one whose *Treasure* and *Heart* are in Heaven, and who continually expects to be *called up* to that happy State. Remember, my Soul—*What Sins* at that Time lay heaviest upon thy Conscience? *What Parts* of thy past Conduct gave thee the greatest Uneasiness or Remorse? Was there any *Matter of Wrong* or *Injury* done thy Neighbour, which then gave thee Concern? Be sure thou now *immediately repair it* : Make the *best Restitution* of which thou art capable ; that it may be abolished and blotted out.—Was there any *Duty* towards GOD, or thy Redeemer JESUS CHRIST ; any Act of Divine Worship for the *Neglect* of which thy Heart smote Thee? *Presently* set about it ; and fulfil thy Solemn Purpose to *live no longer* in its Neglect.—In a word, *whatever good Thing* thou didst then *wish* thou *hadst done*, or *resolvedst to do*, if GOD would be pleased to spare thee, now *do it without Delay*, with Diligence, and *all thy Might*. Behold ! GOD has heard thy Vows ; and given thee further Space to *work out thy Salvation* ; *take heed* that thou *perform* what thou didst solemnly *promise* ; beware of being found *false* or

treacherous to thy Covenant. Remember, thy Times are yet in GOD's Hands: And if thou break the Condition upon which thou wert restored, it may justly be expected that another Sickness will soon be sent—And that then no Prayers nor Vows from such perfidious Lips will any more procure a Reprieve, or move the Divine Regard. Better were it never to have vowed, than to vow and not perform^r.

‘ BLESSED SAVIOUR, keep ever upon the
 ‘ Thought and Imaginations of my Heart, that
 ‘ *serious Sense of Things* my late Sickness im-
 ‘ press’d. Oh! that I could always view the
 ‘ *World*, the Riches, the Poms, the Crosses,
 ‘ and the Frowns of it, in the same *just and true*
 ‘ *Light*, in which I *then* beheld them! How
 ‘ *patient* under Trouble; how *contented* with
 ‘ my Lot; how *easy* and *cheerful* as to all tem-
 ‘ poral Events, should I then pass the *few Days*
 ‘ of my Pilgrimage in it! How *void of Offence*
 ‘ *both towards GOD and towards Man*! How
 ‘ *far* would it lift my Soul above the Reach of
 ‘ that *Love of Money*, that sordid Esteem and
 ‘ Desire of Earthly Things, which *is the Root*
 ‘ of a thousand Evils, and which so horribly *de-*
 ‘ *bases* and *disturbs* the Minds of Men! Oh may
 ‘ the SPIRIT, even the *Holy Ghost*, into whose
 ‘ Name I have been baptized, and whom the
 ‘ *faithful WORD OF GOD* hath promised
 ‘ to send, to bring *Things to our Remem-*
 ‘ *brance*, and to lead us *into all Truth*, may
 ‘ this SPIRIT of Grace and Truth ever preserve

‘ *Eccles. v. 5.*

‘ upon

‘ upon my Mind the worthy Sentiments of my
 ‘ Sick Bed; and assist me to perform the Vows I
 ‘ then made. *I have sworn, and I will perform*
 ‘ it, that I will keep thy righteous Judgments.
 ‘ So help me, O my GOD. Amen.’

IV.

HAVING been thus graciously redeemed from the Power of the Grave, perhaps from the Horrors of eternal Darkness and Death, it now also behoves me with the deepest and most grateful Resignment to ask—*What shall I RENDER to my ALMIGHTY DELIVERER?*

THIS great Favour on GOD’s Part, demands surely some answerable Return on mine. *What Tribute* can I render, on this Occasion, which he will be pleased to accept? I will make my most thankful Acknowledgements for his Mercy principally in these three Ways.

I. BY rendring my most hearty Praises and Thanksgivings to the DIVINE MAJESTY; acknowledging this great Blessing to have come to me from HIS HAND. *To HIM will I offer the Sacrifice of Praise continually, even the Fruit of my Lips, giving Thanks to his Name.* Awake up my Glory; and let all the Powers within me now devoutly awake, to give Thanks to the ALMIGHTY Guardian and Preserver of my Frame! ‘ BLESSED be the LORD, my Life,
 ‘ and my Strength, the Lifter up of my Head,
 ‘ my Saviour and my Help in the Day of my
 ‘ Distress. *I was brought low, and he helped*

* Psal. cxix. 106.

† Heb. xiii. 15.

' me ^u. Tho', in Wisdom and Mercy, He
 ' chasten'd me sore, yet, praised be his Name,
 ' he hath not delivered me over to Death ^x. I said,
 ' in the cutting off of my Days, I shall go to the
 ' Gates of the Grave: I am deprived of the Re-
 ' sidue of my Years ^y.—But God my Almighty
 ' FATHER beheld my Affliction: My Cry came
 ' up before him: He sent, He delivered me from
 ' the horrible Pit, and hath enlarged my Steps:
 ' He girdeth me with Strength, and maketh my
 ' Way perfect ^z. Bless THE LORD therefore,
 ' O my Soul, and all that is within me—bless his
 ' holy Name. Bless THE LORD, O my Soul,
 ' and forget not all his Benefits: Who forgiveth
 ' all thine Iniquities: Who healeth all thy Dis-
 ' eases: Who redeemeth thy Life from Destruc-
 ' tion: Who filleth thy Mouth with good Things,
 ' so that thy Youth is renewed like the Eagle's.
 ' The LORD is plenteous in Mercy; He will not
 ' always chide, neither keepeth his Anger for
 ' ever. He hath not dealt with me after my
 ' Sins: But as the Heaven is high above the
 ' Earth, so great is his Mercy and Loving Kind-
 ' ness towards us. Like as a Father pitieth his
 ' Children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear
 ' him: For he knoweth our Frame; he remembreth
 ' that we are but Dust ^a.—Bless the LORD, ye
 ' his ANGELS who excel in Strength, ye Ministers
 ' of his, who are sent forth at his Command to
 ' perform a thousand compassionate and kind
 ' Offices for us, and who in his Dispensations to
 ' us Men behold the manifold Wisdom and Good-

^u Ps. cxvi. 6. ^x cxviii. 18. ^y Isa. xxxviii.
 10. ^z Ps. xviii. 6. ^a Ps. ciii. 1, 2.

‘ness of GOD. — Thus will I sing unto the
 ‘LORD as long as I live; I will sing Praises
 ‘unto my GOD, whilst I have any Being^b:
 ‘Every Day will I bless him, and will praise
 ‘his Name for ever and ever^c. Thy Vows are
 ‘upon me, O GOD, I will render Praises unto
 ‘thee; for thou hast delivered my Soul from
 ‘Death^d. Thou hast turned my Heaviness into
 ‘Joy; hast put off my Mourning, and girded
 ‘me with Gladness. SALVATION therefore,
 ‘and Glory and Honour, and Power unto the
 ‘LORD our GOD^e. Amen—Hallelujah’—

AND, forasmuch as to the *Intercessions* of JESUS, our great *Advocate* in Heaven, we are, no doubt, highly indebted for such Deliverances as these; to HIM also should our *devout* and *most thankful Acknowledgements* be particularly address’d. The great *Master of the Vineyard* had, perhaps, given out the Command, “Cut down that barren Tree; why cumbereth it the Ground^f?—” And the awful Sentence had been immediately executed: I had now been numbered amongst the Dead—But, my compassionate HIGH-PRIEST appeared for me, in the Court of Heaven, and interceded on my Behalf.—“LORD spare it yet a little longer, ’till I furnish ther manure, and try to make it produce more and better Fruit.” When we sin, we have an Advocate with the FATHER, even JESUS CHRIST the righteous^g: And the effectual fer-

^b Ps. civ. 33. ^c Ps. cxlv. 1, 2. ^d Ps. lvi.
 12, 13. ^e Rev. xix. 1. ^f Luke xiii. 7. ^g 1 John
 ii. 1.

vent Prayer of this most righteous Person doth, no question, oftentimes save the Sick, and remove the Calamities our Sins have brought upon us.

‘ WORTHY therefore is the Lamb that was slain, and who now ever lives in the Presence of GOD to make intercession for us, most worthy to receive Blessing and Honour, and Glory and Praise. I bow myself, as at thy Feet, compassionate and mighty SAVIOUR ; I worship and praise thee with all the Powers of my Soul that thou wert not ashamed to call us BRETHREN ; that thou didst take the Body which was prepared thee ; that thou didst bear in it our Sicknefses, Maladies and Pains ; yea, that thou didst humble thyself unto Death, and enteredst the darkest Mansions and Horrors of the Grave, that thou mightest rescue us thence. Everlasting Thanks be to HIM who loved us, and hath washed us from our Sins in his Blood : And who by his Sufferings and Death hath obtained Power to heal all manner of Diseases, and even to raise the Dead. I adore the kind INTERCESSOR who look’d from Heaven with a pitying Eye upon me ; who pleaded my Cause before the eternal Throne ; and hath procured me a Reprieve from the Sentence of Death—Unless the LORD had been on my side, then when Dangers and Distresses rose up against me and compassed me around, they had swallowed me up quick ; then the proud Waves had gone over my Soul : But, for ever blessed be his Name, who hath not given me a Prey into their Teeth ; the Snare is broken, and I am escaped.’

AND

AND as my blessed Saviour himself in the near Views of Death, when *the Powers of Darknefs* were let loose upon him, once felt great *Horrors* and *Dejection of Spirit*, infomuch that he stood in need of the Ministry of an *Angel* to *strengthen and comfort him*^h; and as he is now become the *HEAD of all the Angels* and celestial Powers for the *Benefit of his Church*ⁱ, sending them forth as *ministring Spirits*, to *minister to them who shall be Heirs of Salvation*^k; I have great Reason to believe that *He sent some of these kind Spirits* to strengthen and support me; to make my *Bed* in my Sicknefs; and to restrain the *Powers of Darknefs* that they were not suffered to assault me with greater Violence and Force. ‘*My Soul doth magnify the LORD, therefore, and my Spirit doth rejoice in CHRIST, my sympathizing Saviour. He hath promised to be with us always, even to the End of the World; and in this Hour of my Distress He was graciously present with me. We have not an High-Priest who cannot be touch’d with a Feeling of our Infirmities, but ONE who once dwelt, yea, who once died, in a Body like to our own; ONE who was tried in all Points like as we are, only without Sin*^l; and who *experimentally knows what Sicknefs, tormenting Pains, and the blackest Horrors of Death mean.*’

O the boundless Dimensions, and Riches of the Love of GOD in Christ Jesus our LORD! What Thanks can I render for this his infinite Grace?

^h Luke xxii. 43. ⁱ Eph. i. 22. ^k Heb. i. 14.
^l Heb. iv. 15.

I will

I will not only *here in secret* pour out my Soul before him in the most joyful Adorations and Oblations of Praise, but I will *go into the House of GOD*, and will *there* in the most solemn Manner *take the Cup of Salvation*, and call upon his Name. I will pay my Vows to my ALMIGHTY RESTORER in the Congregation of his People ^m. I will there present myself as a living Monument of his Power and Grace: And as in the Time of my Distress I earnestly desired that public Prayers might be made for me; so now that GOD has heard, and delivered me from it, *in the midst of his Church will I sing Praises to the MOST HIGH.* ‘The Living, O LORD, the
 ‘Living, they shall praise thee as I do this Day ⁿ,
 ‘and hope ever to do thro’ every Day of my
 ‘future Life. My Soul shall make her Boast in
 ‘the LORD, the Humble shall hear thereof and
 ‘be glad. O magnify the LORD with me, and
 ‘let us exalt his Name together. I sought the
 ‘LORD and he heard me, and delivered me from
 ‘all my Fears. This poor Man cried, and the
 ‘LORD heard him, and saved him out of all his
 ‘Troubles ^o.’

2. SOME extraordinary ALMS or Act of Bounty to the Poor, is a Thank-Offering also highly proper to be render’d on this Occasion. My Alms shall come up together with my Vows and my Praises before GOD: For these are an Odour of a sweet Smell, a Sacrifice well-pleasing and ac-

^m Ps. lxxvi. 13.
 xxxiv. 1, 2.

ⁿ Isa. xxxviii. 19.

^o Psal.

ceptable in his sight ^p. Nor indeed can I expect that any *Sacrifice of my Lips*, any Praises or Acknowledgements which I make with my *Tongue*, will be regarded by GOD, if not accompanied with a *sincere Compassion* to my Brethren in Distress. *My Goodness*, or Benevolence, cannot extend to *Him*, who is infinitely and unchangeably happy in himself; but it may to his *Children and Servants upon Earth*; many of whom I see in great Suffering and Want. Now these he hath appointed to be his *Deputies* or *Representatives* to receive my *Thank-Offering* and Benevolence in his stead; and has expressly assured us, that *whatever Kindness we shew to them*, he will accept and reward as if done to *Himself* ^q. This Commandment have we from him, that he who professes to love God, must love his Brother also. But *whoso bath this World's Goods, and seeth his Brother have Need, and shutteth up his Bowels of Compassion from him*: How dwelleth the Love of GOD in him ^r?

I HAVE now richly experienced the great *Mercy of GOD* to me. I not only live, but have *Life sweetned* and *enriched* with a thousand Comforts and Blessings. These Blessings therefore I will now endeavour to *extend* and *disperse* abroad amongst those who are in Want. The Sick and the Diseased are peculiarly entitled to my compassionate Regard. *Freely I have received, freely therefore I will give*: And having obtain'd *Mercy from GOD*; I will, as he most

^h Phil. iv. 18.
iii. 17.

^q Mat. xxv. 40.

^r 1 John

juſtly and reaſonably expects, ſhew *Mercy* to others — *My ſick Bed* was ſofter'd with Reſreſhments and Supports of various Kinds : but how many may I ſee around me, grappling at the ſame Time, not with *Sicknefs* and *grievous Pains* only, but alſo with *Poverty* and *pinching Want* ? Tender and ſympathizing Friends attended my Diſorders, and by a thouſand kind Offices ſweeten'd that bitter Cup : but Multitudes, perhaps, much worthier and better than myſelf, are now languiſhing under ſore Diſeaſes, unpitied and unhelpt, — have no *Medicines* to relieve ; no *Cordials* to cheer them ; not ſo much as *proper Food* to ſupport their ſinking Frame ; either perishing for want of ſome friendly Hand to ſuccour them ; or living at beſt but a wretched and dying Life. — As GOD has put it in my Power to miniſter ſome Relief to them, I will now cheerfully, liberally, and heartily do it. So much — * — I will now immediately conſecrate and ſet apart as a *Thank-Offering* to GOD, to be laid out in Acts of Charity to the Sick and the Poor. ‘ FATHER of Mercies, GREAT PA-
‘ RENT of Mankind, be pleaſed to accept it,
‘ and direct me to proper Objects on whom to
‘ lay it out. Of thine own, I give thee ; I owe
‘ thee my ſelf, and all that I have. I will ever
‘ henceforward behave with greater Tenderneſs
‘ and Compaſſion to the Diſtreſſed, than I have
‘ hitherto done ; will offer up my Prayers for
‘ them with truer Sympathy and Concern : Nor
‘ will I give them good Words and Wiſhes only,

* Here let a certain Sum be laid aſide, according to the Perſon's Ability and Faith.

‘ ſaying

ſaying—*Depart in Peace, be warm'd, be filled—
' but will deny myſelf ſome unneceſſary Gratifi-
' cations and Expence, that I may be able to com-
' municate the more freely to their Relief.'*—

THO' I am NOW *raiſed from a ſick Bed*, I know I muſt very ſoon *lie down upon it again*, lie down to riſe no more till the *Reſurrection of the Dead*. And how pleaſant will the *Review of ſuch Acts of Bounty and Mercy* be, in my *then ſick and dying Hours*! *Bleſſed is the Man who hath thus conſidered the Poor*; the LORD will deliver him in the *Time of Trouble*: the LORD will ſtrengthen him upon his *Bed of Languiſhing*, and will make all his *Bed in his Sickneſs*.—*Bleſſed are the Merciful, for they ſhall obtain Mercy*. By ſuch *Alms and Deeds of Charity* CHRIST hath given me *Grounds to hope I ſhall make to myſelf Friends*, which will avail me greatly in my *laſt Moments*; and *who*, when I am thruſt out of this World, *will receive me into everlaſting Habitations* in the other. Finally,

3. To the Enquiry—*What ſhall I render unto the LORD?* a proper Reply is—I will render him MY SELF. I will now make an humble and unfeigned Surrender of my *Body, Soul and Spirit* into his Hands. I will lay myſelf under the *moſt ſacred and inviolable Obligations* to be henceforward *the LORD's*; To his *Mercy* I owe it, that I am not now *number'd amongſt the Dead*: The *Life* therefore he hath ſo graciously *redeem'd from Deſtruction*, I will in the moſt ſolemn Manner poſſible *conſecrate and devote to his Service and Fear*. I will ſay with the grate-

' Luke xvi. 9.

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ful

ful Psalmist on the like Occasion. ‘ I will love
 ‘ the Lord, because he hath heard my Voice and
 ‘ my Supplication ; therefore will I call upon him
 ‘ as long as I live. The Sorrows of Death com-
 ‘ passed me, the Pains of the Grave got hold
 ‘ upon me ; I found Trouble and Sorrow : Then
 ‘ called I upon the Name of the LORD. O LORD,
 ‘ I beseech thee deliver my Soul.—Gracious was
 ‘ the LORD, and righteous ; yea, our GOD was
 ‘ merciful—Thou hast delivered my Soul from
 ‘ Death, mine Eyes from Tears, and my Feet
 ‘ from falling. I will therefore walk before the
 ‘ LORD in the Land of the Living. O LORD,
 ‘ I am thy Servant, truly I am thy Servant, thou
 ‘ hast loosed my Bonds ^s.’

THESE Vows, and this solemn Dedication of
 MY SELF, which I here make in secret, I will
 take the first Opportunity of Ratifying in public,
 and of making afresh at the Table of the LORD.
 I will there enter my Name amongst the Follow-
 ers of the Lamb : and declare before the World,
 before Angels and Men, my stedfast Resolution
 henceforward no more to live according to the Lusts
 of the Flesh, but according to the Will of GOD.

‘ THY Love constrains me, blessed SAVIOUR
 ‘ of Men ; for THEREFORE Thou didst die,
 ‘ and rise again, and revive, even that thou
 ‘ mightest become, and be acknowledg’d, the
 ‘ Lord, and Proprietor both of the Dead and of
 ‘ the Living ^t. I am under infinite Obligations

^s Ps. cxvi. 1, 2.

^t Rom. xiv. 9.

‘ to live unto THEE. I confess that I am *not my own*: I rejoice that I *am not*. I am most truly and justly thine, *bought with thy Blood*, and redeem’d by thy Intercessions from the deserved *Sentence of Death*. Assert, MIGHTY PRINCE, thy *Property and Claim* in me. Subdue every Enemy which in any wise opposes thy Government in my Breast. Bring every *Passion and Power of my Soul* into willing and chearful Subjection at thy Feet. Thro’ THEE I now unfeignedly *yield myself to GOD*: presenting *my Body a living Sacrifice to HIM*“, to whose Mercy alone I owe it, that all its Organs and Members are not now imprison’d and mouldering in the Grave. O may I obtain Grace ever henceforth to live as one *who is dead indeed unto SIN, but alive unto GOD, through* JESUS CHRIST our LORD *.’

AND as now, through the Divine Favour, I am returning to the World, and going out again to act my Part upon the Stage of Life, I will endeavour to return to it with *this religious Sense of Things* deeply wrought into my Mind. I will frequently look back upon, consider and renew these my good Purposes: and hope I shall ever be the better for *this Visitation*, and that it will appear by my future Conduct that *in very Faithfulness and Mercy GOD did thus afflict me*. Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I have learnt and will religiously keep his righteous Judgments—But these good Sentiments, I am aware, will soon vanish like the Morning Cloud,

“ Rom. xii. 1.

* Rom. vi. 11.

if GOD by his good Spirit doth not continually assist me. What then shall I do to render them efficacious, permanent, and lasting? I will lay it down as a Rule, from which I will in no Case depart, *Every Day of my future Life to commend myself BY PRAYER to the Grace of GOD, and of our Saviour JESUS CHRIST.*

THOUGH of myself I cannot maintain, nor bring into Execution, these my virtuous Resolutions; but shall soon fall before Temptations if left to my own Strength; yet through CHRIST strengthening me, *I can do all Things.* 'Tis of infinite Concernment to me then, that I offer up my constant and earnest Prayers to Heaven. If I continue instant in this Duty, and ASK Help from GOD; I am assured I shall receive it. But if I fall into a Neglect or Disuse of daily Prayer, I shall certainly soon fall by returning Temptations: shall fall back into a worldly and sensual Course of Life: shall forget the solemn Vows and Purposes I have now made: and so shall be like the Man, out of whom the unclean Spirit went for a Season; but returning, found his old Habitation empty, swept, and garnish'd, better fitted for his Reception: Whereupon he goes and takes with him seven other Spirits, more wicked than himself, and they enter in, and dwell there; and the last State of that Man is worse than the first^y — I tremble to think if this should prove to be my Case. As the only Means to prevent it, is to make my daily Supplications to Heaven for Help; I again resolve, never to let any future Day pass over my Head, without humbly invoking

the ETERNAL SOVEREIGN of the *World*, and recommending myself to his Protection and Grace.

AND now, my *Soul*, having taken *this View* of what thy ALMIGHTY RESTORER justly expects from thee on thy RETURN to a new Life; do not content thyself with this *single View* of it: be advised often to *review it*. Once every Week (every *Lord's-Day* if possible) at least for some Time, *read over* and *consider* these pious Sentiments and Reflections, that they may not *too soon* wear away, but may *take Root* in thy Heart. And as I cannot better *conclude* these my Meditations, nor *begin* my new Life: I will now cast myself down as before the *Throne of Divine Grace*, and offer up my Soul in

A SOLEMN ACT OF DEVOTION,

O R

SELF-DEDICATION TO GOD.

EVERLASTING GOD; the Fountain of Life; who fillest, supportest, and quickenest all Things: I bow myself, as in thy Presence, and unfeignedly adore thee, as the *Former* of my Body, as the *Father* of my Spirit, and as the constant *Preserver* and *Benefactor* of both. I confess myself to be under *infinite and every possible Obligation* to love, and to serve Thee, with all the Powers of that *excellent Nature* thou hast given me: but in innumerable Instances I have *greatly abused*, and thereby *forfeited* my Life. FATHER, I have sinned against Heaven, and
C 3 before

before thee; and am no more worthy to live upon the Face of thy Earth, or to taste the various Goodness which is here provided for thy Children. The noble Organs of my Body, and Powers of my Soul, I have too often yielded as Instruments of Unrighteousness to the Service of SIN; most justly therefore might I now have been languishing under Sickness, rack'd by tormenting Pains, or cut down by the Hand of Death—But, adored be thy Mercy, thou hast not rewarded me according to my Deserts: That thou still waitest to be gracious; and hast lately interposed by thy kind and almighty Arm to remove my fore Disorders, and to rescue me from the Grave which was just swallowing me up. I drew near to the Shades of Death, and unless thy Goodness had prevented me, my Soul had now dwelt in Silence, and gone down amongst the dead. For ever magnified be thy Grace, which hath turned my Mourning into Joy; which said unto me return; which permits me yet to live, yea, to live surrounded with Blessings of such various kinds.

WHAT Thanks can I render to thine INFINITE MAJESTY for this unspeakable Favour! I praise, I extol thee, with all my Spirit and Strength. I adore thee as my LIFE, and the Length of my Days, the Guardian, Preserver, and Restorer of my Frame: and here, as with a prostrate, and most truly grateful Soul, I consecrate and give MY SELF absolutely to THEE. I most solemnly avouch thee ALMIGHTY JEHOVAH, (as in thine infinite Goodness thou hast been pleased to permit me) for my Father, my Portion, my King, and my GOD. The Life which THOU gavest me, and hast thus graciously

ciously preserv'd, I most unfeignedly *devote to Thee*: to be regulated by *thy Laws*; spent in *thy Service*; and conducted in *thy Fear*. I renounce every Thing as *my Happiness* in comparison of *thy Favour*: And to *please and obey Thee*, shall be the chief Ambition and Care, and the governing Principle of all my future Life.

ALL my Concerns, both of Body and Soul, I most gratefully *resign* into thy wise and good Hands: rejoicing that thou wilt condescend to manage and direct them for me. I now promise, through thy Help, to be *always contented*, yea, will endeavour to be *always thankful*, however thou art pleased to deal either with *me*, or with *mine*: being assured, that THOU knowest *what is good for me* infinitely better than I can judge for myself. Behold O LORD I am *thine!* *thine* by the most sacred and inviolable Ties; *made by thy Power*; *maintain'd by thy Bounty*; *guarded by thy Providence*; *restored by thy Favour* when going down into the Pit; and by the Blood of thy *dear Son redeemed* from the Power of eternal Darkness and Death—Deal therefore with *thy Servant* as seemeth Good in thy sight. Whatever *Substance, Knowledge, Influence, Time*, or any other Talent, I now do, or ever shall possess, I most heartily devote it to thine Honour and Service. Thy *Will* shall be the *Rule*, and thy *Glory* the *End* of all my future Actions; and some part of *every Day* shall be employed in solemnly invoking and praising thy GLORIOUS NAME. Chuse, O LORD GOD most wise and most merciful, *my Portion* and *my Lot* for me: guide me by *thy Counsel* through all the Mazes of
the

the present World, and at last receive me to *thy Kingdom and Glory* in the other.

TO THEE, likewise, HOLY JESUS, my most gracious Redeemer, the Son of GOD, and Saviour of the World, I most unfeignedly, *devote MY SELF, and ALL that I have. Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive Blessing, and Honour, and Glory, and Power, and Wisdom, and Riches, and Strength.* I was lost, but *Thou* savedst me: a Prisoner of Death, but *Thou* diedst, that *I might live.* I am *thine*, for thou *hast loved me, and wash'd me from my Sins, and redeem'd me by thy Blood:* I now therefore, from my Soul, absolutely renounce whatever is inconsistent with *thy Property and Claim* in me: I sincerely abjure *the World and the Flesh*, as far as they in the least oppose *the Authority* of CHRIST; whom *alone* I now avouch as my *Proprietor and King.* I here *bow myself* before Thee, in token of the deepest and sincerest Subjection of my *Body, Soul, and Spirit* to thy Government and Care. I bind myself as by a *solemn Oath of Allegiance*; swearing to be *faithful* to my DIVINE MASTER even unto Death: that *his Enemies*, shall be *my Enemies*; his Friends, *mine*; and that my *whole Life* shall be conducted according to the *Pattern and Laws* of his Gospel.

I BELIEVE in THEE, *Blessed* JESUS, as THE CHRIST of GOD; as the *only Saviour* of the World; as the *Light, the Resurrection, and the Life of Men.* I most humbly resign my Understanding, my Will, and every Passion and Power of my Nature to be sanctified, controul'd, and directed by *Thee.*—Take a *distressed Soul* into the Arms of thy Love, who flies to
Thee

Thee alone for Salvation and Help : Write my Name in the Book of Life : Support me under all the Troubles ; strengthen me for all the Conflicts ; carry me safe through all the Difficulties and Dangers of my present State ; and at last present me faultless before the *Presence of* GOD with exceeding Triumph and Joy.

AND forasmuch as by *my own Strength* I am utterly unable to *keep the Covenant* I have now made, and to *perform* what I have *promised*, I here also most humbly dedicate myself to the HOLY and Ever-blessed SPIRIT ; *my Body* I most thankfully devote to be *its Temple* ; and every Power of *my Soul* I resign to *its Influence* : may it descend and ever *dwell in me* ; and so *entirely possess me*, that every Appetite and Passion, every Thought and Imagination of my Heart may be made perfectly conformable to the *Image and Will of GOD* ; and I may daily grow up into a *Meetness* for the Mansions of *the Blessed* above.

AND now blessed be GOD who has *inclined* my Heart to enter into this Covenant ; and blessed be his Name, who, I trust, will *enable me* faithfully to keep it. In an humble Dependence upon the promis'd Aids of *his Spirit*, through CHRIST my all-powerful and compassionate Redeemer, I will now subscribe *my Name* to it, and call *Heaven* to witness to my Sincerity therein.

OH that the Covenant I now *ratify on Earth*, may be *ratified in Heaven* ! Affix, blessed SAVIOUR, who art the Mediator of the new Covenant, *thy Signet* thereto ; and now *seal* by THY SPIRIT both my Body and Soul to that
ever-

everlasting Redemption for which according to thy Promise we believingly wait. *Amen* and *Amen*.

Done this Day of
in the Year 176

PASSAGES of Scripture proper to be read on this Occasion are the xxiii. xxvii. xxx. xxxii. lxvi. ciii. and cxvi. *Psalms*. And the xxxviii of *Isaiah*.

F I N I S.



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